

GPhone Announced, Morons

Several years ago, the key members of the team at Danger, then the leading phone OS development firm (they made the Hiptop, called the Sidekick in the US), left to start a new company called Android, which was shortly thereafter acquired by Google. The folks at Android were not shy at what they were up to. One founder, who was in Boston at the same time I was, stated it clearly: they were creating an open OS for phones. When asked what the point of this was, he suddenly got very vague.

A couple years later Apple released the iPhone and what was now a Google division started rounding up partners for the Android OS. The press got wind of it and went crazy. Google was making a phone — a GPhone! How could Apple compete? What fancy gadgets did it have? Would Google take control of the cell phone industry too?

And today, Google announced what they were doing: the same thing they were always doing, the same thing Android had been doing since day one. They're making an open OS for phones.

The only announcement today is of their new "Open Handset Alliance", which I can't help but feel is a jab at the Open Content Alliance (which Google pointedly refuses to join). Google has certainly put their clout behind the team at Android and gotten an impressive number of people to sign up to support their little OS. But let's not let the press buzz get out of hand. Google isn't coming out with a phone, they're releasing an open phone operating system. When asked what the point of this is, they suddenly get very vague. Just like always.

I certainly can't imagine that having an open phone OS is a bad thing and I'm glad such talented people are working on it and I hope it's good and gets widely adopted, so I can get an even nicer Sidekick cheaply. But, jeez people, let's not blow this out of proportion. It's just a bunch of open source software.

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November 6, 2007